

In the Specification:

At page 1, line 15, after "This application is a", delete " continuation-in-part", and insert therefor ~~+~~continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. 08/826,426, filed March 27, 1997, now U.S. Patent No. 5,891,692, which claims priority benefit of.

In the Claims:

Cancel claims 1-44 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein.

Add new claims 45-69:

--45. A method for enhancing the transformation ability of a bacterium, said method comprising increasing the fatty acid content of the membrane of said bacterium, wherein said bacterium exhibits enhanced transformation ability relative to the transformation ability exhibited by said bacterium prior to increasing the fatty acid content.

46. A method for enhancing the transformation ability of bacteria, said method comprising increasing the fatty acid content of the membrane of said bacteria, wherein said bacteria exhibit enhanced transformation ability relative to the transformation ability exhibited by said bacteria prior to increasing the fatty acid content.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein said bacteria exhibit enhanced transformation ability after storage at temperatures of from about +4°C to about -80°C.

Sub 2 48. The method of claim 46, wherein said increasing the fatty acid content of the membrane comprises enhancing expression of one or more genes that encode one or more gene products which increase said fatty acid content.

49. The method of claim 48, wherein said enhancing expression comprises increasing transcription or translation of said one or more genes.

Sub 1 50. The method of claim 48, wherein said enhancing expression comprises increasing the copy number of said one or more genes.

51. The method of claim 46, wherein said bacteria are gram negative bacteria.

52. The method of claim 51, wherein said bacteria are *Escherichia*.

Sub 1 53. The method of claim 52, wherein said bacteria are *Escherichia coli*.

Sub 2 54. The method of claim 46, wherein said fatty acid is selected from the group consisting of oleic acid, linoleic acid, palmitoleic acid, and cis-vaccenic acid.

55. The method of claim 54, wherein said fatty acid is selected from the group consisting of cis-vaccenic acid and palmitoleic acid.

56. The method of claim 48, wherein said one or more genes are selected from the group consisting of a *fabB* gene, a *fabF* gene, a *fabD* gene, a *fabG* gene, a *fabA* gene, a *fabI* gene, a *fabZ* gene, a *fadA* gene, a *fadB* gene, a *fadE* gene, a *fadL* gene, a *fadR* gene, a *farR* gene, and a *fata* gene.

57. The method of claim 56, wherein said one or more genes is a *fabB* gene.

58. A method for enhancing the viability of a bacterium after storage at temperatures of from about +4°C to about -80°C, said method comprising increasing the fatty acid content of the membrane of said bacterium, wherein after said storage, said bacterium exhibits enhanced viability relative to the viability exhibited by said bacterium prior to said increasing the fatty acid content.

59. A method for enhancing viability of bacteria after storage at temperatures of from about +4°C to about -80°C, said method comprising increasing the fatty acid content of the membrane of said bacteria, wherein after said storage, said bacteria exhibit enhanced viability relative to the viability exhibited by said bacteria prior to increasing the fatty acid content.

60. The method of claim 59, wherein said increasing the fatty acid content of the membrane comprises enhancing expression of one or more genes that encode one or more gene products which increase said fatty acid content.

61. The method of claim 60, wherein said enhancing expression comprises increasing transcription or translation of said one or more genes.

62. The method of claim 60, wherein said enhancing expression comprises increasing the copy number of said one or more genes.

63. The method of claim 59, wherein said bacteria are gram negative bacteria.

64. The method of claim 63, wherein said bacteria are *Escherichia*.

65. The method of claim 64, wherein said bacteria are *Escherichia coli*.

66. The method of claim 59, wherein said fatty acid is selected from the group consisting of oleic acid, linoleic acid, palmitoleic acid and cis-vaccenic acid.

67. The method of claim 66, wherein said fatty acid is selected from the group consisting of cis-vaccenic acid and palmitoleic acid.

68. The method of claim 60, wherein said one or more genes are selected from the group consisting of a *fabB* gene, a *fabF* gene, a *fabD* gene, a *fabG* gene, a *fabA* gene, a *fabI* gene, a *fabZ* gene, a *fadA* gene, a *fadB* gene, a *fadE* gene, a *fadL* gene, a *fadR* gene, a *farR* gene, and a *fatA* gene.